

SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE TROPICS

AN ANALYSIS

OF THE

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF THE TEMPERATE
TOWARD THE TROPIC AND SUBTROPIC ZONES, ESPE-
CIALLY AS AFFECTING THE RELATIONS OF THE
UNITED STATES TOWARD MEXICO AND
THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

BY

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PRESENTED BY MR. WADSWORTH

JANUARY 24, 1916.—Referred to the Committee on Printing

WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

1916

16-26336

JV 201
P33

REPORTED BY MR. CHILTON.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
March 23, 1916.

Resolved, That the manuscript submitted by the Senator from New York [Mr. Wadsworth] on January 24, 1916, entitled "Self-Government in the Tropics," by Samuel L. Parrish, be printed as a Senate document.

Attest:

JAMES M. BAKER,
Secretary.

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APR 15 1916

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By SAMUEL L. PARRISH.

Climatic conditions have not only played a determining part in the past economic and political history of the world, but are of pressing importance to this country at the present time in connection with its attitude toward those parts of the Tropics which are forcing themselves upon our attention.

Take a map of the world, or, better still, a terrestrial globe, and girdle the earth with the parallel lines of the thirtieth degree of north and south latitude, and you will have contained therein what is generally known as the "heat belt," wherein the average mean temperature throughout the year is about 68° F. Within this belt, inclosed by the lines running $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north and south, lie the Tropics proper, with a much higher mean temperature. On each side, north and south, between the twenty-third and the thirtieth parallels, lies a zone somewhat loosely called the subtropics.

Within this subtropical territory climatic conditions are for the most part sufficiently similar to those of the Tropics to make such generalizations as hereinafter follow approximately applicable. The enervating character of the climate, combined with the bounty of nature, which, in return for little labor, supplies the limited wants of the natives, has from time immemorial within these zones produced a population essentially inefficient as compared with that of the Temperate Zone. Taking, then, the whole heat belt as a starting point, an inspection of the map will disclose, speaking broadly, the following geographical facts:

Within this belt, in the Western Hemisphere, will be found most of the peninsula of Florida, the West India Islands, Mexico, Central America, and the territorial bulk of South America.

In the Eastern Hemisphere lie practically the whole of Africa, the extreme north and south being alone excluded, a large part of Arabia, southern Persia, Baluchistan, nearly the whole of India, Burmah, Siam, and the Malay Peninsula, French Indo-China, southern China, the islands of the Indian Ocean (including the Philippines and Oceanica), those myriad islands of the Pacific, embracing Hawaii. To this vast domain should be added, in the Southern Hemisphere, northern Australia. The Philippine Islands lie entirely within the Tropics proper.

The theme of this article, namely, the development, in barest outline, of four propositions in connection with the future orderly progress of this vast area of human activity, will be made more clear by constantly keeping the above facts in view.

My first proposition is that the economic importance of the Tropics in their relations to the Temperate Zone is constantly increasing. To the civilized nations of antiquity the Tropics were practically unknown. As the most important example of the truth of this statement, it may be noted that the Roman Empire, relatively the most extensive and powerful political combination known to the ancient or modern world, was never successfully extended—outside the narrow Valley of the Nile and adjacent territory—to the south of the thirtieth degree of north latitude. But with the dawn of the modern era the whole scene changes. At the end of the fifteenth century there was inaugurated for the first time in history the system under which we are now living, whereby the Caucasian deliberately set before himself the task of dominating, directly or indirectly, every corner of the earth's tropical surface which by its products could in any way add to the wealth and prosperity of the Temperate Zone. And into this vortex of competition for control the United States has at last been unwillingly, though irresistibly, drawn.

The history of the initial struggle for world supremacy among the European nations, though a familiar one and only incidental to the development of my argument, is so fascinating that it may well bear repeating here.

At the time of the discovery of America and the passage to the Indies around the Cape of Good Hope, or comparatively soon thereafter, there were in the world just five civilized, consolidated, maritime powers capable of taking part in the approaching struggle for world empire, namely, Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and England.

Germany and Italy, hopelessly divided for the most part into insignificant and continuously warring little States, were, for the purposes of world aggression, merely geographical expressions, and Russia, as known to-day, did not exist. Spain and Portugal were the first in the race, and through the genius and daring of their native and adopted navigators and adventurers, had, in an incredibly short space of time, brought under the flags of their respective countries, at least prospectively, the whole of the tropical world in the Western and no small part of that in the Eastern Hemisphere. Later on came the Dutch, establishing themselves, first as traders and then as sovereigns, in the most important of the large islands of the Indian Ocean, and there they remain to-day. Strange as it may now seem, France and England were the laggards in the race and when they woke up to what was going on around them, they discovered that most of the undeveloped tropical world, then considered of value, had already been appropriated by the three other powers.

To-day, of the original five maritime European nations, practically but three are left—England, France, and Holland—which undertake to administer the government of a tropical country from the Temperate Zone. Three others have, however, loomed up within the last 40 years as factors to be reckoned with in the solution of the colonial problems of the world; Germany, powerful and aggressive,

adding enormously to the complications which must be encountered; Italy, a country which must of necessity play a modest part; and Russia, who up to the present time has, in view of her geographical position, decided to confine her energies to the development of her vast Empire by the consolidation of contiguous territory within the Temperate Zone. And here it may be noted as a generally accepted fact that the desire of Germany to obtain "a place in the sun" or, in other words, her ambition to share in, if not become a dominating factor in, the control of the Tropics is one of the most potent of the underlying causes of the present conflict now raging throughout half the world.

Returning to the main line of argument, I would like to call attention to the vast increase in the relative trade of the Temperate Zone with the Tropics, as shown by the trade statistics published by the various Governments. Anyone who will study these figures will at once recognize that the first point has been reasonably demonstrated, namely, the wonderfully increasing commercial importance of the Tropics in their economic relations to the Temperate Zone.

This brings me to my second point, namely, the impossibility of colonizing the Tropics by white immigration on a scale of sufficient magnitude to affect local industrial conditions. Attention is invited to the fact that according to the Philippine Gazetteer, issued by the United States War Department some years ago, there were in the city of Manila, on May 1, 1901, 2,382 Spaniards out of a total population of about 245,000. Manila being the centering point for the trading class, it would seem therefore an exaggerated estimate to place the resident Spanish population through the islands, after a political domination of over 300 years, at over one-half of 1 per cent. In the Dutch East Indies the resident Dutch population seems to be even less. In India the proportion of resident European civilian whites to the whole population is probably considerably less than one-tenth of 1 per cent. In Venezuela, the Encyclopedia Britannica gives a pure Caucasian population of about 1 per cent. In Jamaica it would appear to be about 2 per cent. In Mexico, owing to climatic conditions resulting from the lofty tableland formation, about 15 per cent. In subtropical South Africa, this tableland formation, combined with the discovery of gold and precious stones, must also be noted as a condition permitting and inviting development of the country by the presence of the white man in large numbers. Speaking then in a general way, it would seem that the above figures fully sustain the second point, namely, the impossibility of colonizing the Tropics by white immigration. Experience has taught the white man that he can not do continuous manual labor under the usual conditions prevailing in tropical countries, and therefore he avoids them.

My third point is that experience has shown that stable self-government, carrying with it the impartial administration of justice and the equal protection of the law to all classes of inhabitants, is impossible in the Tropics if left in the hands of an indigenous population without supervision,

In an examination of governmental conditions, which from time immemorial have existed in the Tropics, I can find no instance of an orderly self-government, with representative institutions, evolved

from the people themselves. Nor, on the other hand, have the efforts made by England in recent times to introduce responsible self-government in her tropical dependencies given any encouragement that the issue of such experiments will prove successful. The mental, moral, and economic factors are all at variance with the conditions required for an orderly self-governing community. Of the millions of men who now occupy, and of the untold millions, who, since recorded time, have been the indigenous inhabitants of the Tropics, I think it may safely be said that no one commanding figure, judged by world standards, has ever emerged from the mass to challenge the admiration of the world as a benefactor of mankind.

The one exception that occurs to me, somewhat ominous though it be, is Mohammed, born just under the Tropic of Cancer. What his influence for good or evil may have been or now is, I can not at present attempt to inquire. Gautama was born at the foot of the Himalaya Mountains. Confucius was the product of the Temperate Zone.

But in art and science, literature and law, in constructive statesmanship, and in the scientific regulation of the relations of men toward each other in all the complexities which go to make up what is known as civilized society, we must look, with two or three interesting primitive exceptions in the subtropics, to the inhabitants of the Temperate Zone alone for the accomplishment of valuable results.

For the creation of a self-governing community, in which the rights of all classes shall be respected, I conceive there are necessary at least four precedent conditions: First, a general recognition of the dignity of manual labor; second, the existence of an intelligent public opinion, as a court of final appeal, whose mandate must be obeyed; third, a willingness on the part of the minority to submit without question to the will of the majority as legally expressed at the polls; and fourth, the existence of an incorruptible judiciary to impartially administer the law in the interest of the weak no less than in that of the strong.

The limits of this journal will not permit a detailed examination into these four subpropositions, but I submit that not even the most ardent advocate of self-government in the Philippine Islands can successfully maintain that any of these precedent conditions, either separately or in combination, now exist, or, within any appreciable time, are likely to exist among the indigenous inhabitants of that tropical dependency of the United States. Orderly self-government never came as a gift from above.

The fourth and last proposition which I have undertaken to develop is, that controlling economic conditions, external and internal, no less than moral obligation, will increasingly compel the United States, as potentially, if not actually, the most powerful of the civilized nations, to bear its full share in the system of dependent tropical government and supervision now recognized as an international factor of unquestioned and growing importance. Of this question it may be said that since our Civil War none more vital has confronted the American people, and in the course of its solution may well be found practically most of the future danger points which must ever beset a progressive nation in the conduct of its political relations with the other nations of the world.

In considering broadly the development of interracial relations between the dominant and inferior races during the past century, one can not but be impressed by the fact that the current has been distinctly in the direction of altruism, so far at least as Great Britain and the United States are concerned, and that, too, notwithstanding the recent outbreak of savage war among the dominant races who themselves inhabit the Temperate Zone.

Slavery has been abolished throughout Christendom, and oppression, injustice, and internecine strife have, more and more, been giving place to orderly government throughout the tropical dependencies ruled from the Temperate Zone.

Warren Hastings would be an anachronism in the India of to-day, while venal Spanish colonial governors in Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines already seem to belong to a by-gone age.

Powerful as was the factor of self-protection in our late war with Spain, a sense of moral obligation alone made that war popular.

But in considering the moral we must not forget the economic side of the question.

As we note the progress of society through its various stages of evolution, there is nothing more striking than the constantly increasing importance, during the past 50 years, of the economic phase of international relations.

But the source of this superabundant energy and resultant accomplishment has been in the Temperate Zone, and now, as never before, it seeks outlets in the farthest corners of the earth. With the vast increase in the wealth of the dominant races, an ever-increasing demand is being made upon every heretofore outlying tropical province of the world to furnish whatever it can best produce, and receive in return therefor such products of the Temperate Zone as may be suited to its requirements.

And if for any reason this production and consumption are retarded by internal disorder, or conditions that science or skill can remedy, then these northern cormorants for economic results insist upon furnishing the remedy. The recent disturbance in the sisal-hemp district of Yucatan which threatened the binding twine industry of the United States, and therefore the American farmer, would seem to have stirred the present administration to greater activity (if we except the incident of the failure to salute the flag) than anything else that has happened in Mexico for the past two years.

To bring order out of chaos for the purpose of permitting the normal economic development of a tropical island at our very doors was at least one of the avowed objects of our late War with Spain.

In the train of that war followed, in natural sequence, our occupation of the Philippine Islands, for in the redistribution of territory and spheres of influence, since the beginning of the decay of Spain's colonial empire, both in the Temperate and Tropic Zones, the United States has been continuously, since the foundation of our Government, Spain's actual and logical heir. Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines are but corollaries of Florida and the original Spanish North American territory which came to us by forced cession after the Mexican War.

To what lengths the combination of economic necessity and moral obligation may yet compel the United States to go, no one may with

safety predict, but I submit that we can not stand still. With the completion of the Isthmian Canal and the resultant increase in tropical trade, new problems arise.

The upholding of a political idea, labelled republican, as in Mexico, but in reality anarchic or despotic, and which is not only practically barren of beneficial results, but stands rather as a menace to the economic advancement of the world, will, I am inclined to believe, appeal less and less to the practical side of the American character. When the present situation is more fully realized, we may well come to the parting of the ways, and the question that may yet divide our own political parties will be our attitude toward the countries to the south of us in the Western Hemisphere. What that attitude may be, will, I think, depend largely, so far as the approximate future is concerned, upon the success or failure of our present experiment in the Philippine Islands.

Should results falsify the prophets of evil who have declared that the government of a tropical dependency is beyond the legitimate sphere of a democratic republic, then I believe we will venture still further into the troubled waters of tropical supervision, following in the footsteps of England.

As between such a solution and the introduction of European ascendancy in those countries, should such an alternative be presented, as well it may be, I assume that the American people would not long hesitate.

Should we in the future be compelled to assume toward Mexico, as well we may, the same relation we have maintained toward Cuba since the Spanish War, there can be little question but that this unfortunate so-called republic would at once become a much more desirable member of the family of nations, both from a domestic and foreign standpoint, than it has ever been in its whole history. That a movement in that direction should have been so long delayed can be nothing but a source of mortification to a great majority of the American people.

That the commanding influence of the Anglo-Saxon in controlling the policies of the world has been constantly on the increase during the past 250 years is a matter of common knowledge.

Whether that supremacy is to be successfully challenged and set aside by Germany as the result of the war now being waged in Europe remains to be seen. It would certainly be a sad day for the many tropical dependencies of the British Empire were the practices of the rigid drillmasters of Germany to be substituted for the beneficent methods of Great Britain in dealing with the natives of India and the innumerable islands of the Tropic sea now under British supervision or control.

But, coming now to the concrete problem of the relations of the United States toward the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands, I submit that the Filipinos, for the purpose of considering those relations, may be divided into the four following classes:

First. A handful of idealists, much given to copious quotations, largely from French authors. These quotations deal, for the most part, with the abstract principles of liberty.

Second. The mute, densely ignorant, overwhelming majority, composed of all the different races speaking diverse languages, whose

only idea of government now is, and always has been, obedience to those who have been set to rule over them by some higher power.

Third. A somewhat wavering, partially educated, small minority, easily influenced, and without any very definite principles to guide their political conduct.

Fourth. A small group of educated men who have both the intelligence and the will to make their influence for good powerfully felt among their countrymen. From this class have come the men whose aid and support must have been invaluable to the Taft Commission and its successors in their arduous labors for the improvement of existing conditions. That this class has been much discouraged by the methods of the present administration can hardly be doubted.

Of the idealists it may be said that they exist in all communities, and, though often valuable members of society, they are not likely to be men of much weight in the daily conduct of public affairs. In periods of acute unrest and widespread popular discontent, when some great social upheaval is impending, they are most likely to play an important part. Men of this stamp were conspicuous at the time of the French Revolution.

To the second class, namely, the ignorant mass, must be mainly directed our efforts to ameliorate present conditions throughout the islands.

To give some idea of this ignorance, it may be noted that with a property qualification of \$250, or an annual tax of not less than \$15, or a knowledge of the Spanish or English language, or the holding of some municipal office under Spanish rule, the number of qualified voters would be somewhat less than 2 per cent of the population, though the introduction of public schools, wherein the English language is taught, has doubtless of late somewhat increased this proportion.

From the small third class, who may be termed the opportunists, we must, for the most part, in conjunction with men taken from the fourth class, select those to whom shall be confided, under American control, the practical details of local government.

Each nation which has heretofore attempted tropical dependent colonial government has insisted upon conducting its own experiments in its own way, and I submit that the sooner we learn the various lessons in store for us the sooner will we arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to the wisest course to pursue.

"The English brain and the Egyptian hand" was Lord Cromer's guiding maxim in the regeneration of Egypt during the nearly 30 years of his wonderfully successful administration of the affairs of that country, and so I believe it will be found that, for an indefinite period in the future, the ultimately responsible officers of the Philippine ship of state must be American, if the crew, no less than the officers, are to safely continue the voyage so auspiciously begun. But to fit them for their responsibilities the officers must be trained, and, following in the footsteps of England, we must have a competitive, stable, high-salaried and absolutely nonpolitical colonial civil service if we are to succeed. When the novelty is over, high salaries and a recognized progressive career will alone enable us to obtain the grade of men necessary for the work we have undertaken in the Tropics.

In this article I have sketched, if only in shadowy outline, some at least of the relations which I conceive to exist between the Temperate and the Tropic Zones.

That the development of these relations upon right lines in the future must be a matter of the deepest importance and concern to the American people goes without saying.

Whether the outcome of the present struggle in Europe for world supremacy, whatever it may be, will tend to accentuate or diminish that importance is a question for the American people themselves to determine.

SOUTHAMPTON, LONG ISLAND, *December 20, 1915.*



